

Insights and Updates: Summer 2012

- **New Insights: Public Awareness and Opinion on Ocean Acidification**
- **Houston, We May Have a Solution**
- **Getting Ready for World Oceans Day**

The Ocean Project is pleased to present this latest update on our market research and outreach initiative. In this issue we highlight new insights about the public's interest and understanding of ocean acidification, as well as some very promising findings on the potential for online advertising as the proverbial rising tide that could lift all boats. We also take a look at some of the ways in which our zoo, aquarium, and museum (ZAM) partners are preparing to participate in our planet's biggest celebration of the ocean, [World Oceans Day](#) on June 8! We hope you find it all useful as you develop strategies and tools to engage your visitors in conservation action. As always, we welcome your [feedback!](#)

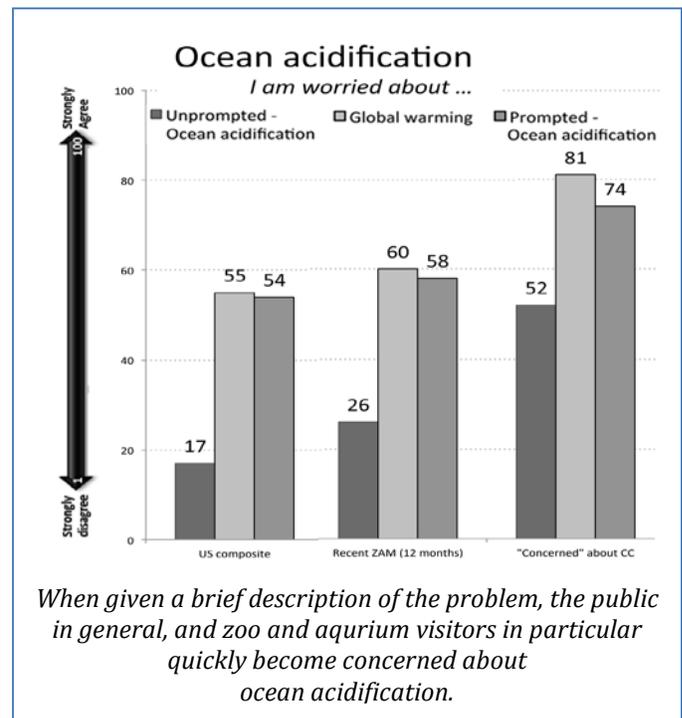
New Insights: Public Awareness and Opinion on Ocean Acidification

The latest round of market research reveals the extent to which the issue of ocean acidification has yet to show up on the public radar. "Only a few individuals said that they had heard of the problem, and far fewer said they were familiar with it or knew what to do about it," explained Bill Mott, director of The Ocean Project.

There is, however, a silver lining to be found in the findings. When provided with a simple description of the problem, concern immediately jumped by as much as 35 points. "There is, without a doubt, an opportunity for zoos, aquariums, and science museums to make a significant difference, and not only in terms of raising awareness," said Tom Schmid, a TOP advisory team member and President & CEO of Texas State Aquarium, a [Priority Partner](#) organization.

In contrast to what has been seen on the broader issue of climate change, this new research strongly suggests that people almost instinctively understand and accept that increased acidity in the ocean is a problem, and therefore want to jump ahead to what they can do to be a part of the solution, especially when put in terms of helping the animals and places highlighted in our partner institutions.

Are you already discussing ocean acidification with your visitors? Please [let us know!](#)



Houston, We May Have a Solution: New Data Suggests Online Advertising Could be the Key to Shifting Conservation Attitudes

When it comes to our shared interest in advancing the public's interest and action on issues such as ocean health and climate change, The Ocean Project and several of our partners wondered if we could use online

advertising in a way that would have a significant and sustained impact for conservation. Based on a new round of results from our pilot project in Houston, we may be on the verge of a breakthrough.

As some of you may have gathered from our recent [blog post](#), The Ocean Project has been working over the last 18 months to pilot an online campaign.

Make a Difference Today



Plastics kill thousands of sea turtles and pollute our ocean. Start making a difference today. Be part of the solution.

The way in which the messaging reflects the research findings can be seen in this sample ad from the online campaign.

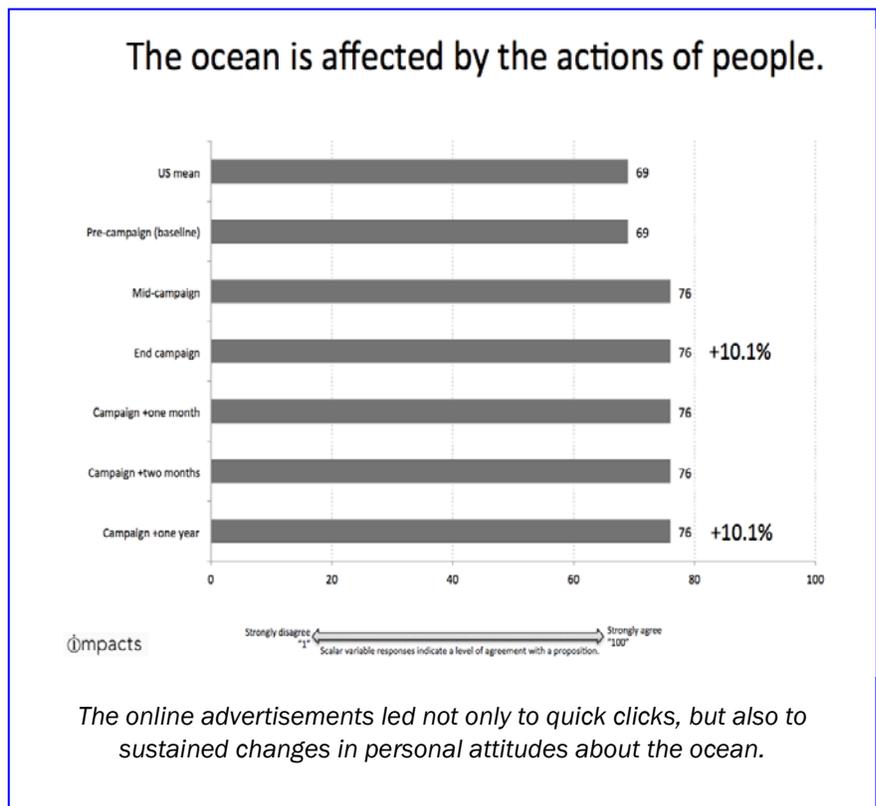
The approach, relatively speaking, was simple and straightforward, based directly on many of our key market research findings. It was aimed at a youth audience in an area with a high number of ESL households, focused on the plight of a specific species (sea turtles) as a way to illuminate a broader problem (plastics pollution), and emphasized opportunities for the audience to be part of the solution.

The campaign's execution, however, was new and novel, and marked it as one of the few times in which a nonprofit organization deployed a significant online advertising, aka "paid media", strategy to deliver unbranded, purely mission-related messaging. (For more details on the campaign strategy, see [here](#).)

Thanks to a third-party donor, we ran a series of online ads through social networks (e.g. Facebook) and search engines (e.g. Google) in Spring 2011, and [reported the initial results](#) last December. Those initial results were indeed promising, showing a notable impact on short-term attitudes and opinions. *What we can report now is even more extraordinary.*

As indicated in the graph below, the overall attitudes and opinions of the targeted audience have remained essentially at their elevated (i.e. more sympathetic to ocean health) levels a *full year* after the campaign's launch. This is notable because we typically see an increase in awareness that dissipates once the campaign ends. In the case of our Houston pilot, however, the impact that we were able to achieve had a lasting effect on the perceptions and beliefs of young adults long after the paid campaign ended.

We're extremely excited about the outcomes of this pilot campaign! Our partners and the wider conservation community are responding with enthusiasm to this effort. Already, we have secured meaningful funding to help scale up this effort nationally and believe that we are on the verge of making a significant breakthrough in shifting public attitudes about the ocean to positions that will be more sympathetic to the long-term health and conservation of the world's ocean.



This pilot campaign focused on reaching people through online impressions and moving the needle as far as awareness and perception. With an expansion of this type of campaign, we certainly plan to provide action steps! We believe that this is in fact something that we can truly test out in collaboration with onsite partners in the next phase of the project. We look forward to working with you! We welcome your thoughts and ideas on this exciting development - please [contact us](#) directly and/or post comments to [our blog posting](#).

Getting Ready for World Oceans Day!

Across the country and around the world, zoos and aquariums, science museums, community organizations, and interested individuals are putting plans in place to celebrate World Oceans Day. The following is but a small sampling of what some of our partner institutions are doing, creatively combining their own interests with the lessons learned from the market research and the theme of this year's event, "Youth: The Next Wave for Change!"



- [California Academy of Sciences](#): World Ocean's Day will be a key theme for the June 7 installment of the popular [NightLife](#), an evening that will be aimed at the upper end of the youth audience (21-25) and focused on improving seafood choices
- [Georgia Aquarium](#) understands the importance of highlighting special places in order to advance conservation, and, as such, will be highlighting [Grey's Reef National Marine Sanctuary](#)
- [Virginia Aquarium and Marine Science Center](#) will make a splash as they celebrate with story times and puppet shows, a "fishy fun" scavenger hunt and Seussian activities throughout the weekend



An increasing number of aquariums are connecting with [National Marine Sanctuaries](#). Grey's Reef NMS (shown above) will be highlighted this World Ocean's Day at the Georgia Aquarium.

Aaron Pope, Manager of Sustainability at California Academy of Sciences, summed up the approach many are taking when saying, "World Oceans Day is a chance for us to highlight the wonders of the oceans and apply some of the lessons learned from the market research, such as focusing on younger visitors and inspiring them with solutions."

Don't miss out! A wide range of ideas and materials – from research tips and marketing kits to video clips and Seussian bits – can be found online in the "[activities](#)" and "[toolkits](#)" sections of the World Ocean's Day website.

For more information, please contact World Oceans Day coordinator, [Alyssa Isakower](#).

About this Initiative: Made possible with funding provided by NOAA. Earlier reports, including the *2011 Annual Update*, as well as complete copies of the two landmark studies – *America, the Ocean, and Climate Change: New Research Insights for Conservation, Awareness, and Action (2009)* and *Communicating About Oceans: Results of a National Survey (1999)* – can be found on our [website](#).

To learn more about The Ocean Project and how you can get involved in our growing global network of over 1,500 ZAMs and other conservation-focused organizations, please visit www.TheOceanProject.org.